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Governor Patrick Opens Access To High-Quality Early Learning Opportunities For Thousands of Massachusetts Children

Over 3,200 children will move off the waitlist for early education

CHELSEA – Tuesday, October 8, 2013 - Governor Deval Patrick today announced that the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) has increased access for high-quality early education opportunities to more than 3,200 children. The new vouchers will assist high-need families with children who are currently on the waitlist for a subsidy to attend an early education and care program in Massachusetts, and help provide more children across the state with a strong educational foundation in their earliest years. Currently, more than 50,000 children each year attend early education programs in Massachusetts through subsidy funding.

“Every child in Massachusetts deserves the opportunity to receive high quality early education, and increasing the number of early ed vouchers will provide thousands more of our children with the opportunity to succeed,” said Governor Patrick. “We know from educators, from academic research, from years of public policy and from our own experience as parents, that investing in our children at a young age pays

huge dividends for them and for our community as a whole.”

Governor Patrick has made reducing the waitlist for early education a priority, proposing a \$131 million investment in his FY14 budget to eliminate the waitlist and support providers with the tools necessary for success. As of September 2013, there were more than 43,000 children active on the waitlist for a child care subsidy. This newest announcement represents the most significant investment in new opportunities for state early child care in nearly three years.

“There is no better investment we can make than one that puts resources behind our children,” said Secretary of Education Matthew Malone. “We know that the earlier our children get access to a quality education the better prepared they will be for elementary school. We have an opportunity to change lives through this type of investment and that is powerful.”

The funding for these new vouchers for access to early education and care programs for eligible low-income and other high-risk families in need is provided in large part a \$15 million investment in the FY14 budget signed by Governor Patrick in July.

“Today we are making an investment that will create lifelong opportunities for thousands of children and help ensure the long-term security of the Commonwealth,” said Commissioner of Early Education and Care Tom Weber. “High quality early education and care is the essential foundation of our education and workforce development systems. Today represents another step forward in achieving the high quality early education and care system that our children deserve.”

EEC's child care resource and referral agencies across the state will work with the families on the waitlist to determine eligibility and issue vouchers where approved. Review of applications from families on the waitlist began October 1, 2013.

Governor Patrick made the announcement following a tour of the Community Action Programs InterCity (CAPIC) Head Start site in Chelsea, which serves 141 preschool aged children. The CAPIC Head Start program in Chelsea receives state subsidy funding to provide wraparound services for some of the children enrolled in the program. In addition, the CAPIC agency provides early education and care services to the families in Chelsea and neighboring communities of Revere and Winthrop through a state-funded Coordinated Family and Community Engagement grant. The resources and services include playgroups for parents and children, activities that promote early literacy and collaborative efforts with Early Intervention that provide inclusive environments for children with special needs.

“By increasing access to early childhood development opportunities, we will ensure that Massachusetts continues to lead the nation in education,” said Senate President Therese Murray. “By encouraging learning and development from the earliest stages, we are creating a path to a bright future for our youngest residents. I am proud of what Massachusetts can offer our children in terms of education.”

“When my colleagues and I set out to create the first in the nation, independent Department of Early Education and Care we recognized that an early investment in educational services is the best way to ensure our children are on track for success in school and beyond,” said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo. “Today, we are not only opening up access to high-quality early education and care, we are also helping working class families by making it easier for parents to get and keep jobs. I commend my colleagues, the Administration and the Department of Early Education and Care for

their continued commitment to providing unrivaled opportunities for our children, and in doing so, helping Massachusetts grow economically.”

“These funds will provide children and families an opportunity to access high quality early education and care,” said Representative Alice Peisch. “I applaud the Administration and the Department of Early Education and Care as they continue to work towards providing a high quality early education for all children.”

“Providing access to high-quality early education opportunities is key to our children succeeding in the classroom and in life,” said Representative Kathi-Anne Reinstein.

“This investment allows local organizations across the Commonwealth like CAPIC, to sustain their extraordinary level of services and expand programs that are essential to our communities achieving.”

“Tomorrow’s competition in what will likely be a more competitive world begins with investment today,” said Chelsea City Manager Jay Ash. “By helping our youngest get an earlier start on their education, Governor Patrick is putting them in a better position to be more successful over their lifetimes. That success translates into better personal stories and, ultimately, a stronger, more vibrant and even more able to compete Commonwealth. I congratulate Governor Patrick for all he has done to keep our economy rolling through some very rough times, and I’m grateful that he is also thinking about today’s kids and tomorrow’s challenges. It is vision like Governor Patrick’s that promises to keep Massachusetts relevant and much more in the years and decades to come.”

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